

Hebron Messenger

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NO 16

LET US GO ON - 10 (Hebrews Chapter Nine) OLD RITUALS AND NEW REALITIES (Two Pictures)

I. THE PICTURE OF THE OLD RITUALS (vs. 1-10).

- 1) Their Location (vs. 1-5). The tabernacle in the wilderness, - its two partitions and their respective furnishings, - all "shadows of the real".
- 2) Their Operation (vs. 6-7). Specially as regards the movements and duties of the priests.
- 3) Their Negative Message (vs. 8-10). "No access possible under this regime" (v.8). "These sacrifices cannot purge the conscience" (v.9). "A 'reformation', or 'new order', is needed, and, in fact, already appointed" (v. 10).

II. THE PICTURE OF THE NEW REALITIES (vs. 11-23).

- 1) A Better Priest (v. 11a), ministering in relation to foretold things.
- 2) A Better Tabernacle (v.11b), not located in this world.
- 3) A Better Sacrifice (vs. 12-14), His own blood (v. 12), purging our consciences (vs. 13,14).
- 4) A Better Covenant (v. 15), holding a promise of "eternal inheritance".
- 5) A Better Inauguration of the Covenant (vs.16-23). It all issued from the efficacious death of Christ. It was this that "released" the glorious dispensing of the new covenant.

III. THE INSPIRING SUMMARY (vs. 24 - 28) . (Three wonders) .

- 1) The wonder of a Heavenly Priest ministering for us in a Heavenly Sanctuary (v. 24).
- 2) The wonder of One all - sufficient sacrifice, not needing any repetition (vs. 25-26).
- 3) The wonder of the soon - emerging Priest, about to present Himself from heaven to those who look for Him (vs. 27,28).

How true it is that "the things of earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace"! And this is certainly true of those old and earthbound rituals which, at best, made way for the coming of Christ.

While we diligently study and prayerfully seek to penetrate the inner meanings of those types, realizing they are God-given "figures of the true", we know full well that the shadows themselves are really nothing compared with that eternal and abiding substance we have found in Christ. All are immediately transcended when, for instance, we see our Greater Aaron moving and ministering on our behalf in an exalted heavenly sanctuary, and presenting for us His own most precious blood. And how wonderful the thought that our Greater Aaron shall soon emerge from His heavenly sanctuary, having presented His better sacrifice, and, so emerging, shall gladden the hearts of all those of us who, in these "outer courts", have been eagerly and anxiously(?) waiting for Him! Even so, come Lord Jesus!

We should ever praise God that Pentecost ushered in a totally new day, a day of the Spirit, when all merely outward aspects, having served their allotted purpose, would be replaced by the inward, and Christ Himself would be everything to His people. Our Lord touched a very deep truth when He told the Samaritan woman that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The context shows that the woman in question was not only blinded by her sin, but also by her earth-bound concepts of religious matters (see v.20). In that sense, at least, she was identical with the leaders in Jerusalem who were taken up entirely with what they called "the Jew's religion". We do not hesitate to say that this is a concept from which all of us need a miraculous and divine deliverance. May God forbid that the outward elements in our "Christianity", such as church-attendance, baptism, laying on of hands, the Lord's Table, material buildings, etc., etc., should ever mean more to us than their inward spiritual counterparts! (To be contd.) C.R.G.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

as from HEBRON, Golconda Crossroads, Hyderabad – 500020, AP, INDIA,
Telephone No. 27613066, 2222008 Date : 18-07-2008.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God our Father, Who hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ. As we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, we may be enabled to follow the same, in the enjoyment of the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 2:5-8,10;1:3,4;Heb. 5:14,15).

We would like to continue our meditation on spiritual blessings, though not describing them in terms of material prosperity as in the Old Testament. Affirming our position in the heavenlies with Christ, everything can truly be called a divine blessing for our spiritual profit, even though its primary form be material. This we have mentioned in our last issue referring to a car or even world's currency, when it is used for God, and not for personal greed and gain or glory.

The same can be true of human relationships. Marriage by itself is a natural and not a spiritual matter, yet let us consider the case of the couple called Aquilla and Priscilla. Although the Scriptures give advice on marriage, they very rarely link two names together as the 'Mr. and Mrs.' manner of address. But these two are an exception and are never mentioned except as a couple, which seems to stress that theirs was a God-blessed union. We should imagine that Aquilla felt as many other husbands have done, that his wife was indeed a gift of God's goodness to him. Call this merely natural blessing if you like, but notice the spiritual outworking. Their natural union became a spiritual blessing not only to them but to many others also. Paul was one of those (Acts 18:3) and Apollos was another (Acts 18:26). Their local church found blessing in their home (1 Cor. 16:19), and eventually many churches shared the blessing (Rom. 16:4).

So much for the good things of this life, but even the seemingly bad things may yet become a blessing to those who dwell in the heavenlies. Things which seem the reverse of benefits can become spiritual blessings. We instinctively know that Satanic 'thorn in the flesh' of Paul's. This must have seemed the very denial of blessings for the suffering Apostle, yet it became an outstanding enrichment not to him and to his contemporaries only, but also multitude of grateful believers since, who have been comforted by the assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee". In countless other cases individuals in Christ have found that personal trials are transformed into spiritual blessing.

And what about church troubles? Paul was grieved and wept over Corinthian situation, but

out of his distress came 1 Corinthians 13, a chapter full of spiritual benefits, if ever there was one. No doubt many modern Christians grieve and almost weep over their church situation. To such the Apostle's advice would surely be that they should beware of speaking or acting in any way contrary to what befits those who belong to heavenly places. In Balaam's day God turned the curse into a blessing for His trusting people (Num. 23:20), and can do the same for us in our days.

In this connection however, it is important not to let genuine blessings from God become the reverse of spiritual. With his uncle Abraham, Lot enjoyed blessings of prosperity. No doubt these were God-given blessings, but they tested him - as all temporal blessings do - and in the end his prosperity proved his undoing. Solomon received material blessings for which he had not asked - unparalleled riches and honour (1 Kings 3:13) - but the sad history shows that his wealth was what largely caused his spiritual decline. King Hezekiah enjoyed the blessing of miraculous healing from a mortal sickness, only to fail so badly that we wonder whether it would have been better for him and his people, if he had then died. So temporal blessings do not automatically bring spiritual advantage.

Costly blessings: God could bring a world into being by simply speaking a word. He could create the human race by shaping the dust and bringing in life. In the matter of true blessings however, we are told that it involved paying a ransom price (Eph. 1:7), and the price was the shed blood of His only Son. Those who belong to the heavenlies come increasingly to realize that the benefits freely given to them have been exceedingly costly to the divine Giver.

To the unenlightened it would seem natural and logical that God being God could have His desires fulfilled at minimal cost to Himself. The fact is though, that in the very same sentence in which the Apostle writes of the Father's original desires and eternal purpose, and of His ability to work everything in accordance with them, he reminds us that this was only possible by redemption, and the essence of redemption is the payment of a price. Blessings are "freely bestowed on us" only because the beloved Son shed His blood to purchase them. We cannot buy such blessings. The sum total of human resources would never be sufficient for the purpose. They are utterly beyond us. They are infinitely valuable.

It is noteworthy that Ephesus was the place where Christians delivered from bondage to Satan made a public bonfire of their valuable belongings, so that a large sum of money - 50,000 'Drachmas', went up in flames (Acts 19:19). If as the N.K.J.V. tells us 'a drachma was about a day's wages', - that gives an idea of what their faith cost them. They did not sacrifice this large sum to become Christians, that would be absurd, but they gladly threw it away on their realization of the much better treasure which had come to them in Christ.

Our individual forgiveness and reconciliation to God are said to be by Christ's shed blood (Eph. 1:7,2:13) and our united life in the body due to His sufferings on the cross (2:16). We are told that in sacrificially giving Himself up, He both made for us individually the relationship of dearly loved children of God (5:2) and purchased the Church for His Bride (5:25). We are also reminded that the Son became dead in order that the power of His resurrection might raise us up from death (1:20). And we could share with Him the triumph of His resurrection (4:9). Blessings which are freely given to us cost the Saviour an infinite price.

Moral blessings: God has a purpose in all His activities and in the matter of our blessings, we are clearly informed that His objective is that we might be "holy, blameless before him". The letter begins by calling us saints - holy ones - and continues with this theme of working in us and working on us so that we may major up to the supreme standard of His holiness. This is the spiritual purpose of our Father in bringing us to birth. But from infancy we must go on to the longer term prospect of maturity and responsible sonship. Predestination is not so much concerned with our

new birth as with our calling to be God's recognized sons, responding to His love as well as receiving it, that we may live "to the praise of his glory" attaining unto mature manhood to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (4:13).

Sonship involves responsibilities. The Father expects of His favored children Christ-likeness of character. Holiness is not to be a burden, but a blessing. Whatever the Father expects of us is already provided for us in Christ. In the heavenlies therefore, we adore Him for the limitless abundance of His blessings. Fortified and sanctified by these, we gladly accept the challenge of learning to live to the praise of the glory of His grace. May the Lord make it true and practical in us more and more.

Please pray for the recovery of Sis. (Mrs.) Shobha Rani (wife of Bro. Jonathan, servant of God at Zion, Narayankhed, Medak Dist.) as she has been undergoing treatment for blood cancer at KIMS Hospital, Hyderabad, since the past three months.

The church at Jehovah-Shammah, Chennai, together with the elders and servants of God would have us to thank and praise the Lord for enabling them to have their 67th Anniversary Special Thanksgiving Service on 12th July. They covet our prayers for the Lord's visitation and reviving in the midst of the years, for the furtherance of His Testimony and the extension of His Kingdom in the land and regions beyond.

Praying that all our activities and involvement in the work of the Lord, may not move us from the simple devotion to Him, and leave the first love and original preoccupation with Him, as it happened with the church at Ephesus,
Rev. 2:3,4 Phil. 3: 8-10 1Cor. 9:25,26

I remain, Yours in His grace, K. PHILLIP

JEHOVAH - JIREH - 3 BAKHT SINGH

When Isaac asked Abraham, "Father, where is the lamb for sacrifice?" Abraham answered, "God will provide". Abraham believed that God could provide a lamb for the sacrifice, and the time would come when God would make him truly righteous in His own sight by virtue of that sacrifice. When you also see your sins and your corrupt mind and spiritually depraved condition, and when you realize that it is impossible for you to become righteous by your own efforts, the question will arise in your heart also, "Where is the Lamb who would die for my sins to make me righteous before God?" The answer is to be found in the words of John the Baptist, which he spoke of the Lord Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Mount Moriah on which Abraham was ready to offer his son Isaac, was the shadow of the cross. On the very same mount the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified later on. Here we see the wisdom of the Lord in taking Abraham to the place where he could learn the meaning of true righteousness. If you have real hunger and thirst for righteousness, the inward force of God will lead you to someone who can show you how to become righteous before God.

You will notice that Abraham did not walk towards Mount Moriah with a sorrowful face, other-wise Isaac would have questioned him, "Father, why are you looking so sad today?" On the other hand Abraham's heart was at perfect rest. He was only thinking of his sins and his need of a sacrifice. It is such an attitude which can draw us also to the Saviour.

When the two reached Mount Moriah, Abraham made an altar, placed the wood upon it, and laying his son Isaac upon the altar, tied him to it. Isaac had questioned his father before but now he did not utter a word; he was perfectly obedient. It is such an obedience to the heavenly Father which made the Lord Jesus to come into this world and die for our sins. It is such an obedience which we also should have.

When Abraham turned round he saw a ram caught in a thicket. God had provided the lamb for the burnt sacrifice. Abraham named the place "Jehovah-Jireh". He meant to say, "Not only has God provided the Lamb for my sacrifice but He will provide all my need. I have no need to worry any more. God is my faithful and loving Friend. He will surely take care of me in every way".

The Apostle Paul also knew God as "Jehovah-Jireh". That is why he was able to say, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). You also can know God as the One Who can supply all your need in your sickness, tiredness, hunger, thirst, your weakness or weariness or loneliness. He will provide all your needs, and your children's and your grand-children's needs. As you trust the Lord more, the more you will find Him true. If you believe the Lord has provided a Lamb to die in your stead and to make you righteous, then you must fully believe that He is your Jehovah-Jireh and will provide you all things that are good and necessary.

Some believers say they know Christ died in their stead. They talk about it, sing about it and even preach about it. Yet, when they lack something which they need very badly, they begin to weep. Sometimes they even complain and give hints to friends or fellow-believers, hoping that they will get sympathy and help. They do not yet know God as their Jehovah-Jireh. Their lives remain barren. On Sunday they will sing that they believe the Lord Jesus died for them and then from Monday to Saturday their faces will be full of worry.

When we were in Kalimpong in October 1968 we witnessed storms, landslides and earthquakes. The roads were blocked and we were not able to leave Kalimpong according to our schedule. Although we had just experienced a wonderful time in the ministry of the Word and in fellowship, and had been much refreshed, in the face of adverse circumstances which followed, many of our fellow-believers were filled with worry. We had gone to Kalimpong because the Lord took us there. He had supplied all our needs wonderfully and through our loving fellow-believers who came to meet us on our way to Kalimpong, we had been loaded with food baskets. Yet, in the time of trial, the hearts of many of us were filled with fear and anxiety. Do not be anxious. God knows how to look after you! He knows how to guide you and protect you from every evil.

If you know God as the One Who meets all your needs, you would not allow any fear to grip your heart. You would not be anxious. The peace of God which passeth all understanding would fill your heart. Then you would find impossible things becoming possible, and the sky which appeared like brass would begin to change and pour down rain for you.

May you have the experience of finding God to be your Jehovah-Jireh.

(Concluded)

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LET US GO ON - 11

(Hebrews Chapter Ten)

CHRIST'S GREAT SACRIFICE AND OUR REASONABLE RESPONSES

I. THE UNAVAILING SACRIFICES OF THE LAW (vs. 1-4).

Shown to be such by their interminable repetition (vs. 1,2). They can only remind of sin - they cannot remove it (vs. 3,4).

II. THE ALL-AVAILING SACRIFICE OF CHRIST (vs. 5-18).

This was the object of His incarnation (vs. 5-10);-(To do Thy will; i.e. to effect God's great purpose of redemption). It was a sacrifice essential to the promises of the New Covenant (vs. 15-18).

III. THE PROPOSED RESPONSES TO THE SACRIFICE (vs. 19-25).

- 1) Let us draw near (vs. 19-20), gratefully appropriating the purchased access to God.
- 2) Let us hold fast (v. 23). A persisting confession of our faith and expectation.
- 3) Let us consider one another (vs. 24,25). A vigorous pursuit of Christian fellowship, and mutual encouragement by each and all on every such occasion! (Cp. Eph. 4:16). It is instructive to notice the order of these "responses", - all must begin by our close touch with God Himself! Apart from that nothing avails!

IV. THE ACCOMPANYING WARNING TO UNBELIEVERS (vs. 26-31).

If Christ's sacrifice is slighted, there is no available alternative (v. 26). Only a commensurate judgment can be expected (vs. 27-31).

V. THE WARM COMMENDATION OF THE HEBREW BELIEVERS (vs. 32-34).

Their earlier sufferings and impoverishments, all gladly endured in the realization that they had in heaven, "a better and enduring substance".

VI. THE FINAL CALL TO A SIMILAR CONTINUANCE (vs. 35-39).

- 1) Being assured of a great reward (v.35).
- 2) Exercising necessary patience (v.36).
- 3) In expectation of Christ's coming (v. 37).
- 4) By exercise of daily trust in Him (v.38a).
- 5) With the prospect of bringing pleasure to the Lord (v. 38b).
- 6) Knowing thereby a great release in their own "soul" faculties (mind, heart, will) (v.39).

There is much in the Word of God about responding to the great sacrifice of Christ – such as the word of Paul in 2 Cor. 5:15, or the great word of Christ Himself as He emerged in resurrection from the Altar of the cross (John 20:15-17). But Hebrews ten is surely the fullest Bible presentation of the subject. Worthy responses depend on adequate revelations, and our chapter contains both. The first eighteen verses show us, once again, the all-excelling sacrifice of Christ as being the means by which the great redeeming "will" or purpose of God was worked out (v.7). Then come the responses.

The whole passage clearly re-echoes, and then amplifies, the awesome statement made at the beginning of the letter, "when he (the SON) had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). Accordingly, we do well to ponder very deeply the proposed responses to such a sacrifice. We have noted how it all begins with a "drawing near" to God Himself (v.22), for apart from that inner thing, all other "responses" would be futile and abortive. And the word in verse 25 about "so much the more as ye see the day approaching" is intended to apply to all three responses, not just the last one. So this is specially a word for our day!

And how gracious of the Lord to take note of those far lesser sufferings which, in their earlier years, the Hebrews had "joyfully" endured for the Saviour's sake! This is perhaps the greatest privilege the Christian has, - "the fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil. 3:10). In the light of all that is unfolded in this chapter, how could we be amongst those who "draw back" (v. 39)? Better to go on with the same believing and the suffering, however costly it might be, and thus give pleasure to Him Who made this supreme sacrifice for us.

(To be contd.)

C.R.G.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron, Golconda Crossroads Hyderabad – 500020, A.P., India
Telephone No: 27613066, Date: 07-08-2008.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and mighty Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, even the God of Jacob, Who hears us and Whose Name does defend us in the day of trouble. It is written of Him in Isaiah, "... and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob". In the same Psalm 20, from which we have the motto text for the year we read, while the nations may glory and trust in their horses and chariots, "we will remember the name of the LORD our God". Trusting in that Name "we are risen and stand upright", even rejoicing in His salvation. His Name alone is Jehovah;- self-existent, independent, immutable, ever-present and all-filling I Am. He alone is worthy to be honored and adored, Whose wisdom is unsearchable, and greatness and power beyond our understanding. He giveth power to the faint and increaseth strength to them that have no might. Upheld by Him, being our defense, we may stand in His purpose according to election, wherever we ought to be geographically or spiritually. Thus we may live to see His purpose promoted through us and His work perfected in us, and be qualified to be called by a new name. By that new name being given to us, we inherit all the spiritual blessings bound up with it, like Jacob chosen to become Israel, as we read in Isaiah 44:23b, "...for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel" (Psa. 20:1; Isa. 49:26(b); Psa. 20:7,8; Isa. 40:28,29).

We would mention three references, referring to three chosen men in the Scriptures. The Lord questions them or speaks of them as to where they are or and how they are in that position in relation to the testimony of life in Christ. Each of these three men had a different relationship to the testimony, and each had to declare so to say what his position was. This immediately confronts us with our own personal faith and feelings. Where do we stand? We have church associations and activities. We have doctrinal beliefs and Bible teachings. But the real question is whether we are in the good of a real and effective testimony to the triumphant life in Christ. This is not just a matter of orthodoxy, or sound evangelism, but rather of the impact of victorious life upon the kingdom of spiritual death and darkness.

Let us carefully consider what had happened on the three occasions described in these texts. 1) "And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:9). 2) "Behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9). 3) "I John... was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the

testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9). The two in the garden were so challenged by God Himself, as was Elijah when he fled from Jezebel. Then there was John who commenced the Book of Revelation by declaring where he was when he received that revelation, and why he was there.

The Lord's purpose in the case of the garden at the beginning, was represented and symbolized by the tree of life. Everything circled around it as may be verified by the reference in the final book of the Bible, the Revelation. So the original man's position was challenged as to its relationship with the Lord's testimony of life.

Elijah was the great prophet of life. How much he had to face discouragement before overcoming death? Eventually he went up in a whirlwind, untouched by death, and triumphing gloriously over it. Here we read of his being questioned as to his position, and pressed by the Lord to state just why he was where he was at that time.

There can be no doubt about the spiritual position of the Apostle John. His whole ministry has been concerned with the testimony of Christ's triumphant life, and it was for that testimony's sake that he found himself in the isle of Patmos. There was no need for the Lord to ask any question as to the whereabouts of His faithful servant, for He Himself had permitted the banishment. But if others might ask, and, if they did, John had his answer. He was there for the sake of the testimony.

Coming back to the first, we find that Adam and Eve had lost their living God-appointed testimony. They hid themselves from the Lord. This means of course, that there was awakened in them a conviction as to their maladjustment to the will of God. There was something gravely wrong with Adam's position. When the Lord asked, "Where art thou?", it was not because He did not know Adam's whereabouts so much as a stern challenge concerning his spiritual departure from the spiritual relationship with Himself which the man had previously had.

In the first place Adam was in a wrong relationship because of disobedience. He had been given light, had been instructed as to his proper procedure but he had willfully disobeyed. Perhaps he thought that he could get something better by taking this willful way, or conversely that he would have lost by not taking it. This latter was certainly the suggestion made to him by the tempter. In any case though, the point of the story is that having been given light by God, he had disobeyed it, and fallen out of vital relationship with the Giver. So far as he and Eve were concerned, the door was now closed and it would require another and a different "Adam" to reopen it. It is a very serious thing to be shown the Lord's purpose and then to reject the light and sin against it. Adam tried to make excuses as we often tend to do but the Lord cannot be put off in that way. No excuses will pass with Him. Adam was out of touch with God, that is where he was, and the inevitable consequence was death.

Elijah, of course is in quite a different category and yet for a moment we sense a certain peril in his position. His difficulty was not disobedience but unbelief. This man who had maintained such a glorious testimony of victorious life was longing to be quit of it all. 'It is no good. Please take away my life, Lord', was what he said, although he was the one man in the whole of the Old Testament who could be expected never to succumb to such a death-wish. Yet here he was, the man who had proved the power of God's life in miraculous ways, now pleading with God to let death have its way with him. God helping we will continue in our next issue.

Let us pray for the Youth Camps, Gospel Campaigns and special gatherings arranged in different assemblies in the land for 15th August, and the week-end as it is the 'Independence day', - a holiday for us. Pray that the Lord may use all such spiritual meetings and Gospel ministry for the salvation of souls and the renewal of faith and obedience of the born again believers. Let us also

pray for all at the helm of affairs in the governance of our country, its welfare and socio-economic and political stability. Also pray that in independent India, we may continue to enjoy freedom of worship and the service of His Kingdom as enshrined in its constitution.

News reached us yesterday, August 6th, that Bro. Isaiah, (ex-Railway employee) a regular worshipper, sharing the responsibility in the church at Carmel, Vijaywada, for the past many decades has been called Home to Glory. Many would remember his service with 'humility of mind' as Paul says in Acts 20:19, honoring the Lord in His House (Psa. 26:8). He rests from his labors (Rev. 14:13). Pray for the comfort of family members.

Praying that we as His elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, and called according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, stand fast in the Lord fulfilling His will and pleasure in the place of His appointment, 1 Pet. 1: 2 2Tim. 1:7,9 Phil. 4:1,5

JEHOVAH - NISSI BAKHT SINGH

In a previous series, we dwelt on Abraham's calling upon God by the special name of "Jehova rwJireh", which means, "God will provide". We said in this connection that God has provided for us one great and perfect sacrifice. As soon as we believe that God has provided an atoning Lamb for our sins, we are reconciled to Him, and become His children. Then God begins to provide for all our needs in accordance with Romans 8:32. When we have received God's beloved Son, we can be fully assured that with Him God will provide everything we need (Phil. 4:19).

We shall now see another name by which the Almighty is revealed in the Scriptures. It is "Jeho-vah-Nissi"- "The Lord, my banner". God revealed Himself to Moses by this name (Exodus 17:15).

When any conqueror wins a battle, the first thing he will do is to plant his flag or banner. In Exodus 17 the children of Israel had just won a battle. They won it through a twofold strategy- through men who fought in the battlefield under Joshua's leadership, and through Moses standing on the hill with the rod of God held up in his hands. The rod in Moses' hands indicated the authority of God. Moses had no strength in himself. When he had cast down the rod on the ground, and it became a serpent, Moses himself had to run away from it (Exo. 4:3). There was no doubt that Moses by himself was without power; whatever he had accomplished since that time had been only by the strength of the Lord. The rod now in Moses' hands as he stood on the mount, signified the authority of God. The men with Joshua were chosen men. They were strong and valiant. In spite of this, whenever Moses' hands were let down they were defeated. It was therefore clear that the victory depended mainly on Moses lifting up his hands with the rod of God.

We also have to fight with many enemies. The worst of these enemies are our own flesh and our own self because through them come forth lust, hatred, enmity, jealousy etc. Our fleshly and selfish desires bring us into a defeated life and cause us to lose our joy, peace and desire for prayer. In this way, many believers are living defeated lives. They try to put up a hard fight against these desires (Gal. 5:17), but very often they do not succeed.

When people are left by themselves in lonely places without fellowship, Satan uses that situation as a very suitable one in which to attack them. Lack of fellowship brings weakness; so Satan tries his best to keep people away from fellowship. Beware of these tricks of the Amalekites! The Lord is warning you now.

The secret of our victory lies in taking the rod in our hands. This rod signifies the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot have victory only by our Bible - reading, or long prayers. The victory of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross alone can bring us victory. In other words, we must not rely on our own strength, but on His strength. Our victory over the flesh and self (Amalekites) depend on how we hold on to the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we notice that while Moses' hands were being held up, they became heavy. He was a man of God. The Lord had spoken with him face to face. Many miracles had been wrought through him. Yet Moses remained a weak man and his hands and feet became tired. God provided a stone for him to sit on. We read, "They took a stone and put it under him," "They" here refers to Aaron and Hur. Aaron and Hur brought the stone for Moses and also held up his hands. Thus, the victory was won.

Like Moses, we are also weak. Do not let Satan discourage you because of your weakness. When we are born again, we do not become superhuman. We need extra grace and strength to keep us steady. The stone brought to Moses by Aaron and Hur, and their help in holding up his hands speak of the fellowship of believers. We need the help and fellowship of other believers to strengthen us in the battle. Thereby we can obtain victory. There are many believers who despise fellowship, and think that by reading the Bible and praying at home they can defeat Satan. They soon fall into some trap of the enemy. We cannot afford to despise the fellowship of God's people and the gatherings for prayer.

May the Lord teach you to depend upon His victory and to enjoy the fellowship of believers. Then you will have victory over the flesh and over self and thus you will know the Lord as your, "Jehovah-Nissi".
(Concluded)

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